

Crowfield
Goose Creek vicinity
Berkeley County
South Carolina

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORIC AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of South Carolina

CROWFIELD (Residence)
Summerville Vicinity, Berkley County, South Carolina

Owner: West Virginia Pulp and Paper Company, Peoples Office
Building, Charleston, South Carolina

Date of Erection: c. 1730

Architect:

Builder: William Middleton (owner)

Present Condition: Portions of the exterior walls and chimneys are still standing up to the second floor level. The interior brick partition walls are gone above the first floor level. The existing walls are still in sound condition. The only woodwork remaining is the head of the frame of one door and two windows and portions of first floor framing.

Number of Stories: (At present) basement and portions of first story.

Materials of Construction: Exterior and interior partition walls brick. Flemish bond with glazed headers on North and South Elevations, English bond on East and West Elevations. Quoins and belt course are stone.

Other Existing Records: None known.

Additional Data: The original grant was made in the year 1701 to John Berringer, who came from Barbadoes. In 1722 it was conveyed to Arthur Middleton, later President of the Council and Governor.

His eldest son, who acquired the estate in 1729, built the "Fine Capital Brick Mansion," surrounding it with extensive and elaborate gardens that soon were famous in Europe.

The name Crowfield was taken from a Middleton seat, Crowfield Hall, in County Suffolk, England.

As late as 1888, having withstood the earthquake, the heavy walls of the ancient "Capital Brick Mansion" stood intact as high as the eaves of the old roof. The woodwork was gone, roof, stairways and floors, but the walls, both interior and exterior, were in such perfect state of preser-

vation that the house might easily have been restored to its original form and beauty. The titanic works that have defied time prove Crowfield to have been the most extensive and elaborate garden in early Carolina, probably in America. (Carolina Gardens, author E. T. H. Shaffer: 1939.)

"The house stands a mile from, but in sight of the road, and makes a very handsome appearance. Next a spacious Basin in the midst of a large Green presents itself as you enter the gate that leads to the house w^{ch} is neatly finish^d, the rooms well contrived and Elegantly furnished. From the back door is a spacious walk a thousand feet long: each side of w^{ch} nearest the house is a grass plot ornamented in a Serpentine manner with Flowers, next to that is - a thicket of tall young live oaks, - Opposite on the left hand is a large square boiling green, sunk a little below the level of the rest of the garden, with a walk quite round composed of a double row of fine, large flowering Laurel and Catalpas - come to the bottom of the charming spott where is a large fish pond with a mount rising out of the middle the top of wh^{ch} is level with the dwelling House, and upon it a roman temple, on each side of this are other large fish ponds properly disposed, which form a fine prospect of water from the House. Beyond this are the smiling fields dressed in Vivid green." (Description of Crowfield in a letter written by Eliza Lucas, c. 1744: Eliza Pinckney, author Harriet Horry Ravenel.)

Author: Eugene Broderick

Approved: YWW 12/5/40

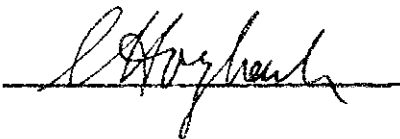
Historical Data:

Edward Middleton and his brother Arthur came from Barbados to Carolina and settled on Goose Creek in the seventeenth century. In 1729, Arthur Middleton of "The Oaks", son to Edward, as President of the Council was Acting Governor of the Province and well able to give his son William a fair-sized plantation near his own with ample means to improve it. This place was then named "Crowfield", after an English property of their family's.

William Middleton married after he received "Crowfield", and proceeded at once to the building of the "Capital mansion . . with twelve good rooms with fireplaces in each besides four in the basement with fireplaces". The "elegant garden . . . extensively laid out with Fish Ponds and Canals superior to anything of the kind" in the Low Country. Enough of the "Capital mansion" remains to show that the front and rear walls were laid up in Flemish bonding with light red stretchers and glazed headers of a purple blue. Within the house, the plan can still be discerned and the parlor chimney still shows the scars of its tile lining, now all plucked off and carried away. "Crowfield" is one of the most vivid illustrations of the changes that came over the Low Country in its first century of life, for hardly was it finished when it began to decline. In 1753, William Middleton sold it and removed to its namesake in Suffolk, where his eldest son remained to become an M. P. and a baronet. Two of his sons came back to live at "Crowfield"; one of them bought the place back in 1783. The Middletons kept "Crowfield" for more than a century thereafter. The house and gardens were allowed to go gradually to ruin along with the unprofitable fields that surrounded them.

Crowfield Hall stood four miles from the Parish Church.

Bibliography: Stoney, Samuel Gaillard - Plantations of the South Carolina Low Country Charleston, Carolina Art Association, 1938



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